



THE
POETS' MAGAZINE.

August, 1876.

INTRODUCTORY.

“**T**HE Poets' Magazine !” an open door !
Setting for newest gems, uncut before,
Of latent Wit and Humour ! We divine,
With rod of potency ! to spring a mine,
Fertile in beauty, genius, and power,
Illumined pages : sunny with a shower
Of sweet poetic fancies ! We give birth
To thoughts profound, to jeu d'esprits of mirth,
To lover's lays—so they be not too long—
To true iambics, and all forms of song
That can delight the ear, and rouse the soul,
And boast a certain harmony of roll.
To earn a welcome—it shall be our creed,
To help the aspirant—till he succeed ;
And not to “bend, or break, a bruised reed.”
Welcome us kindly—if we interpose,
And ask admittance, 'midst the Monthly Prose,
Who shall forbid us ? sailing in the wake,
Now we at last a *Poets' Corner* take.]

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ON THE POETIC ELEMENT AND ITS NATIONAL EXPRESSION IN ART.

PART I.



MAGINATION is the creative faculty of the soul, and the very word poet signifies a *creator*. As speculation anticipates experiment, thought precedes action, so to the poet is ascribed the origin of all those arts, sciences, and discoveries which are the offspring of the imagination. The poet is ever in advance of his generation, he is the pioneer of progress, he is the guide through the labyrinths of ignorance and superstition : rapt in the ardour of prophetic ecstasy, he forecasts events, and in the present he realizes the future.

Thus the *poetic element* was predominant in Alexander, when, a yet untried soldier, he saw himself the founder of a universal monarchy ; in Columbus, when he described, as with a painter's eye, the undiscovered continent of America ; in Newton, when he conceived the law of attraction, albeit he could not at first support this sublime theory by positive demonstration.

The poet conceives the unembodied thought, he strikes out a vague generalization, and from the unexplored, the undiscovered, the unknown, he deduces some mighty truth, which he leaves to lesser minds to develop and apply. His philosophy is *deductive*, not *inductive*, his arguments are based on no definite data, but he depends on that intuitive faculty of the soul which accepts truth as well as announces truth—as if for a moment the ethereal element which animates the human soul acted independently of the senses, and asserting a superior existence, confessed the divine original. It is this vastness and expansion of thought which Shakespeare has so wonderfully brought home to our comprehension, when he represents Prospero breaking his magic wand, and uttering that sad yet triumphant soliloquy upon earth and all her finite and unsubstantial creations.

Passing from the poetic element in its intellectual ideal, the subject next to be considered is the method of its expression. Without subordinate agents the soul would be mute and silent. It might illuminate the mind of the individual, but diffusion there would be none. The soul and the external world require some medium through which the electric spark may pass and repass, and bring them into relation the one with the other. And the senses supply this necessity, and

are the connecting links between the world without and the world within. Unlike the soul, they have no independent action, but are subordinate to the dictates of intelligence. As speech is the earliest acquired and the most in requisition, so we find that this sense is made the chief medium of connection between the soul and the world. And as a natural consequence, poetry taken as rhythmical composition was among the earliest cultivated of the liberal arts. Painting, sculpture, and architecture, sweet sisters of the parent Muse, found the early world ill-prepared for their beneficent influence. It took ages before they exercised any permanent sway, and nation differed from nation in the expression of their homage. For while Poetry (in the common acceptation of the word) is altogether intellectual, the Fine Arts require material agency for their development, and they are pure or debased in accordance with the skill, cultivation, and national characteristics of their exponents. *Poetry* ever aims at ideal beauty (which is but another name for perfection); *art* is the material expression of this intellectual desire. As perfection can only exist in God, so we find that the Fine Arts were early consecrated to deity.

It may be well to take a rapid glance at the national expression of this universal passion.

Egypt has been named the cradle of the liberal arts. But while the monuments of her skill remain, but little has come down to us of her literature. With the Egyptians all art was consecrated to deity. The human element was kept in abeyance, and a system of symbolism was encouraged which shadowed out to the unlettered a mystery too deep for them to penetrate. Who can stand within the pillared halls of Karnac, or amid the ruins of Thebes, without being filled with mysterious awe? Realize if you can the avenue of lions which led up to the temple, surrounded by colossal forms, in which calmness, power and impassiveness are the prevailing characteristics. The Egyptian mind sought perfection but found it not. Her imagination could not reach ideal beauty and she accepted a counterfeit—a colossal humanity—divested indeed of human passions; but only a void remained, and no divine afflatus infused life into the inert yet shapely material. As the most subtle combination of sounds, the most perfect rhythm, and the finest alliteration does not constitute poetry, unless thought animates the composition; so in like manner the perfect mechanism of art is nothing without a soul—informing power to vivify the creation. Art was transported to Greece, and it lived. Yet Egypt achieved an excellence to which no other nation has ever

attained—that of impressing on the mind of the beholder the feelings of awe and reverence by the majesty of *repose*. The Egyptians knew the superiority of *rest* over *action* in representing the sublime, and in the personation of this attribute they specially excelled.

The Greek school was founded on the Egyptian. Pythagoras, who sojourned for many years among the white-robed priesthood of the Nile, is supposed to have introduced into Greece the key to the system of harmonious proportion. Prior to his time, music and poetry had already attained to excellence; but painting, sculpture and architecture reached their zenith in the succeeding generation. To return to the well-known axiom, that thought ever precedes action: Poetry had prepared the way for the acceptance of the Fine Arts, but their development required material agency. The eye and hand as well as the taste had to be educated. Homer, the tragic poets, and all their bardic brethren, together with the great philosophers, had infused, as it were, into the Grecian mind that divine yearning after beauty which burst into material expression in the age succeeding that of Pythagoras. It was then that Ictinus designed the Parthenon, and that Phidias wrought the matchless bas-reliefs which adorned the pediment. The Apollo sprang to life, the ideal of manly beauty; while all that constitutes feminine loveliness was perfected in the Venus.

The Grecian artist learnt how to produce beauty without the affectation of ornament, grace and delicacy without conceit, strength without coarseness, and action without loss of balance. The Egyptians may have discovered the law of proportion, but the Grecians raised the law into a principle—the principle of symmetry. This was observable in all their works. The expression of the passions, pain, joy, love, sorrow, was made subordinate to this regard for symmetrical propriety, and never exceeded the limits of positive beauty. Even in the Laocöon the expression of physical suffering is mitigated, and the mental quality of the individual is intensified. In actual nature the limbs of the two youths (sons of the priest of Jupiter) would be compressed and distorted by the contracting convolutions of the serpents; but distortion is opposed to beauty, reality is therefore sacrificed to the ideal. To delight and satisfy the mind was the great aim of Grecian art. There was a saying among the Greeks that “there is nothing noble in nature but man, and nothing noble in man but mind.” This principle ran throughout the whole of their philosophy. It was the mainspring of their religion: for what was

their whole Pantheon but humanity deified? It prompted the contemplations of Plato, it made Socrates indifferent to life, and placed the Stoics above feeling. It fostered the *ideal*. And the constant straining after an ideal perfection must elevate the soul, and impose upon the imperfect some relative perfection.

The next grand epoch in art is the Roman. This again was based upon the Greek; but it was influenced by the national character. The religion of the Romans was more corrupt, more sensual, more debased than that of the Greeks. Their literature partook of the same qualities. No pure and single-minded modern can rise without a sense of loathing from the perusal of the master-pieces of Latin composition. Alike in poetry as in prose; Horace and Virgil, Livy and Tacitus, are more familiar with the dark and deadly passions of humanity than with those gentler emotions of the soul which raise and elevate mankind. And so with art. Disdaining the simplicity and purity of the Grecian schools, the Romans sought by exaggerated action, positive colour, and complicated ornament to supply the want of originality and beauty. In architecture they fostered the Corinthian orders to the neglect of the plain and elegant Doric and Ionic. For the frieze embellished with sculpture they substituted florid ornaments and repeated terminations. Their sculpture was less exquisite in form, and their renderings of allegories were less refined. Of their painting little is known. Their mosaics do not lead to the idea that they were proficient in the art.

After the long interregnum during which barbarism prevailed, art once more revived. And to the northern mediæval nations we owe the last original school, that of the Gothic. While Greek art has been styled "the beauty of *symmetry*," Gothic art may be termed "the beauty of *emotion*." Mind predominated in the one, heart in the other. Nay, was it not so in literature? Go back to mediæval times, to runic song, to legend, roundelay and romance; from the wild chants of the Scalds to the softer singing of the Troubadours. Whether in field or in bower, in court or in cottage, the emotions, not the intellect, swayed the heart of Christendom. And with reverence be it spoken—was not this a necessity? Man indeed had not (in the vain ideal of the ancients) risen to Deity, but Deity had stooped down to man. "Manifested in the flesh;" man might now acknowledge a personal God, participating in all the feelings of humanity, hallowing all the relationships of life, and purifying the world by infusing into its putrefying elements the salt of purity, holiness, and immortality.

The Grecian idea of Deity was sublime. Grant it. They represented Him as a being without passion, feeling or emotion, indifferent to the puny affairs of this world, wrapped in the seclusion of a Divine Majesty. And in order to resemble this conception of the Deity, they endeavoured to divest themselves of all the attributes of humanity; or when indeed the yearnings after sympathy made the isolation too overpowering for the soul to endure, they instituted a subordinate order of divine intelligences, whose inherent qualities chiefly consisted in their appreciation of the lower and baser elements of man's nature. Dimly, darkly, it may be, but the spirit of revealed religion animated the heart of humanity. It was no longer considered unmanly to feel, and the emotional, whether in literature or in art, was opposed to the classic symmetry and calm idealism of the philosophic schools.

Space forbids minute inquiry into the varied forms in which Gothic art has been developed, and the countless phases of thought and expression through which it has passed, but in a succeeding article it is intended to take a rapid glance at the effect produced by the modern poetic school, and the influence it has exercised upon art since the commencement of the Christian era.

A. E. G.

SONNET.

IN my young days nought could my spirit please,
 But ever shaping out some glorious aim
 And lofty purpose. To achieve high fame
 And deathless reputation, on my knees
 In prayer I shook, like slender sapling trees
 Before God's hurricane : and nought could tame
 My burning thirst to gain a mighty name,
 And be world-famous over lands and seas.
 But time has taught me tenderness and truth,
 And beauty, with contentment, joy, and rest,
 And love, without the fever-fire of youth,
 Live in obscurity, and make their nest
 Like nightingales in secret. Now, forsooth,
 am unknown here—yet supremely blest.

J. HUTCHINGS.

STREWN ASHES.

BY ALFRED HARBLON.



WITHIN the after-hours of sleep
I viewed my spirit rise and reap,
From earth and heaven hopes and fears,
Soft loves that were as harps of fire,
Dead loves that perished on the pyre;
Pure Love, that died before desire
Had whispered in her waiting ears
The song of tears.

And through deep agony, I wis,
I bade my spirit bow and kiss
The sleek white brow and curven lips,
And, as my spirit held her hands,
Life, through the grains of severed sands,
Broke from her heart: the golden bands
Fell from my love, as one who grips
A hope that slips.

And these were ashes in his path,
The harvest and the aftermath,
Faded from fire to broken dust:
And all the air was thick and shed
With waking woe, discomforted
My spirit bowed his sorrowing head,
And wept for ruined hope and trust
Amid the gust:

Till it swept down a breath of fire
Upon the ashes, and a lyre
Sang in the flame; my spirit rose,
Shook tears and sorrows from his face,
Older and greyer, sped apace
Toward the glorious light and grace
Of that flame-melody, and woes
Faded as snows.

THE PAST.

I DEDICATE the following poems to the Past—to a time of fair promise and beauty that ended in nought, to a spring that, without an intervening summer, faded into winter, to a draught that was goodly to behold and was poison, fathomless in its depths, and was of dregs alone. In the bitterness of my despondency I would obliterate the Past for ever from my memory, were it not that the present would recall to me, though I were dead or mad, the dust of the ashes that have encumbered the spirit of my life.

PHRYNE.

IN the sweetest morrows of May,
 In the sight of the opening year,
 We trifled and played for a day,
 Till the summer withered away,
 And the winter of time was here.

And this was the song of your time;
 "For love and delight and lust!"
 The burden of chant and of rhyme,
 And then in a wintry clime;
 "For tears and mourning and dust!"

Your face was a fire of flame,
 And your heart leaped high in your throat,
 The red blood curdled and came,
 As I bowed all pitiful, lame,
 When your light lips lingered and smote.

We laughed—Aye, we laughed in vain—
 I held your hands, and I clung
 To your arms, and I felt the pain,
 As desire was buried again,
 Was buried, revived, and sprung.

In grass-grown shallows of shade,
 In fields of zephyrous wheat,
 In the green wild woods of the glade,
 In caves where the fierce lights fade,
 I cast my life at your feet.

The grass grew brown with the sun,
And faded, withered, and died,
There were none to wonder, but one
Said : " Now it is finished and done ;
The glory and verdure and pride."

The wheat was heavy and hot,
With days of labour and dust,
For this was its living and lot ;
So men said, " Pity it not,
It has withered in orient lust."

The woods were broken with frost,
The red leaves glittered and fell,
And thus, as they idly tossed,
Quoth all men, " Curses have crossed
In forest, and copse, and dell."

And the cool sea-caves are swept
By the fierce winds' quivering leaven,
The waves that lingered and crept
Have long time fallen and slept,
Lulled low by the burning Heaven.

I could wish you dead, but I know
That death is a marvellous grace,
And I know no torture or throe
That could fire through your limbs of snow,
Or wreathe in your smiling face.

You broke my life with a breath,
You took my hopes, and you flung
Of these to perishless death,
Of these to brake and to heath,
To wheresoever they clung.

I hope you will live for ever,
Till the world shall weary and wane,
And you stand by some roaming river,
And pray to its stream to sever
Your life from your bitter pain.

May you live till your flame-light face
Grows pale and grey with the years,
Till you lose your leopard-like grace,

And tremble and tire in the race,
 With this song of mine to your tears.
 Till you call to the pitiless wind
 With sobs reliefless and sad,
 Till you pray to the tempest to find
 One pause and rest for your mind
 Remorseful, weary, and mad :
 Till you wake, and quiver, and see
 My vengeance close on your tread,
 And waking, fearfully flee,
 Acclaiming for mercy : for thee
 My mercy is withered and dead ;
 Till your eyes, that were beacons for men,
 Are shrunken, and blind, and dim,
 And you creep through forest and fen,
 Away from hearing and ken,
 With palsy of spirit and limb ;
 Till your name is a scorn and a gibe
 On the lips of your lovers and foes,
 Till they mock you and hate, and proscribe
 Your name from nation and tribe,
 A name of limitless woes.
 Then ere the day of your death
 You may think through the hours of me,
 How that you broke with a breath,
 And flung, to the brake and the heath,
 The love I had cherished for thee.

SUB TEGMINE FAGI. I

AH, Love, my lips had scarcely met thine own,
 Ere there was bitterness within my heart
 And on my tongue, and that hot aching smart,
 That causeth us so fully to atone
 For all that we have done and left undone,
 Fastened and severed, bound and torn apart,
 The passion that we wove,
 O Love, my Love !
 Look, Love, look hence into the dying years,
 Look through my soul, bound breath and breath with thine,
 Behold therein the hecatomb of tears,
 The gall that lurks beneath our sweet soft wine :

If thy fond love still unto mine adheres,
 Thrives as of yore it throve,
 O Love, my Love!

We, in those bitter years that are at hand,
 Will turn with eyes to eyes and breast to breast,
 As two fierce loving eaglets in their nest,
 And pluck lost love from time's fast-fleeting sand,
 With pulse to pulse and breast to bosom pressed,
 Soul locked in soul, until we reach the strand,
 Who shall such love reprove?
 O Love, my Love!

And for the present? Love, it seemeth fair:
 Press my hot cheek again with lips, waxed red
 As fallen fire, and let thy perfumed hair
 Lie on thy breast: I will be still and dead!
 Thus shall we rest and thou shalt be love's bread
 And I his wine: then satisfied and fed
 He shall our joys approve
 O Love, my Love!

THE SHADOW OF HELL.

LA bufera infernal che mai non resta,
 Mena gli spirti con la sua rapina,
 Voltando e percotendo li molesta.
 Quando guingon davantialla ruina,
 Quivi te strida, il compianto e il lamento.

* * * * *

Ellé è Semiramis, di cui si legge,
 Che succedette a Nino, e fu sua sposa;
 Tenne la terra, che'l Soldan corregge.
 L'altra è colci, che s'ancise amorosa,
 Eruppe fede al cener di Sicheo:
 Poi è Cleopatrás lussuciosa.
 Elena vedi, per cui tanto reo
 Tempo si volse, e vedi il grande Achille,
 Che con Amore alfine combatteo.

DANTE.

The seething flames grow fiercely, soar,
 And delve the darkness of the night
 Beneath the current, whereon pour

Shades who unite and disunite
Over the burned black anthracite,
Who bleed in drips of clotted wine
On waves of fire, above whose light,
Silent and shiftless, dead, supine,
The old loves shine.

Aye! yonder flashes with the flame
She unto whom all lips did kiss,
She of whom all earth knows the name,
The fair sweet-souled Semiramis;
The flame tongues, faint with ambergris,
Leap high to press the tender mouth,
In olden time, of love like this,
There was no fallow field or drouth,
From North to South.

The loves that years of longing fed
Grow fiercely here with sympathy,
And charred grey ashes, red and dead,
Bestrew the spouse of Anthony,
Who glides across the gleaming sea,
As one who dreams of waking woes,
Of dead delights and lechery,
Of blood wherein no northern snows
Can quench the throes.

The barren bosom whereunto
All men did bow, the flowerful face,
Are fed with little flames. Ah! who
Shall strew men now such godly grace
As she in whom the sun-tired trace
Of love still lingers, she who wore
Warriors and kings in her embrace,
In palace, tent, and gilded prore,
In years of yore.

As one who struggles to pursue
A shadow shed across the sun,
To snatch some blossomed hidden hue,
And waking ere the goal is won,
Would clasp the skein wherefrom has run

The thread that held the dying dream,
Elisa by the whirlpool spun,
Falls where the fire-lit faces seem
To wake and gleam.

And here with languid limbs and eyes,
That lose no light beside the flame,
Broken with amorous sobs and sighs,
She moves, whose never-dying name
Re-echoes with her world-writ fame,
Mistress to war and love's compeer,
Helen, whose passion and whose shame
Built, stone by stone, and year by year,
Troy's sepulchre.

Adown the black stream, hand in hand,
As speedily as waves that bear
The ocean's offerings to the sand,
Paolo and Francesca fare
Amid the dark and loathsome air,
In lucent love: whereof the end
Was swift and certain, as a snare
Whose coils and fearful folds distend
To seize and rend.

Paolo's breath upon her face
Glowed hot and fiercely when she died,
She grew with very passion's grace,
When he, to whom she came as bride,
Without rebuke, or word, or chide,
For broken pledge, or love undone,
Slew both, and silent, side by side,
They left the lands that share the sun,
The spool unspun.

Surely no death is fair as this:
A burning breath upon the cheek,
The choking sob that fires a kiss,
The fevered blood that quits the sleek
White limbs, to leave the body weak
With very overwrought delight,
The little writhing laughs that fleak
The face for joy—a scathing light,
And endless night.

"What shall it profit?" Nay, bethink,
If all the world be rich enow,
To find a fairer draught to drink
Than this sweet hemlock, whereto bow
These flames of love that bite the brow,
And find the life-blood fevered there:
God help me, but I weary now
Of this hot heavy hell-born air,
This glint and glare.

Away from cities: by the wheat,
Where in the summer-smitten air,
The noontide blossoms lean and meet,
Within the fierce unbroken glare,
There yet is set the subtle snare,
That drags the spirit down—and down—
To this flame-gathering harvest, where
The love of old is loth to frown,
To die or drown.

Think you in hell the yoke is shed'
More heavily on throats than here,
That when we pass among the dead
The mingled fires are not more clear,
That so they cling, and so adhere,
That on the beaten paths of hell
We shall wax worn and stricken sear,
As on this sun-robed road where fell
The old love's knell?

I thought that out of sound and sight,
Within some gloomy gruesome grave,
Nurtured and held by hands of night,
Where sun and light are loth to save,
Warped in the death that slumber gave,
This old lost love was dead and shed,
And now, as some tall architrave,
She lifts her sad and sorrowing head,
White and flame-red.

And on the burned and burnished ground
We tread our measure as of old,
With wistful eyes that have not found
Before our feet one trace of gold,

With limbs grown heavy, whereto hold
 The little flakes and snakes of fire,
 Until when many years have rolled,
 This life of loving shall expire
 In dead desire.

R. I. P.



COME alone and oft
 Where maiden grasses wave,
 And sweet south winds blow soft
 Above her grave.

My darling lieth here :
 Oh, not to weep and rave
 I come now, but to pray
 Beside her grave.
 No monumental tomb
 In some cold cloister'd nave
 Is hers : but linden trees
 Watch o'er her grave.
 The agony is past,
 I know that He who gave
 Hath taken, and I look
 Beyond her grave.

WILLIAM ARTHUR LAW.

WILL.



EXPERIENCE teacheth wisdom. This we know,
 But then how many worship Folly, till
 The golden sands of life are running low,
 Before they learn what fruits unyielding Will,
 When planted deep in virtue, and with truth
 Most freely watered, can on man bestow,
 By giving him in age a second youth,
 Whose vigour shall surmount the direst woe.
 Since Christian Will a radiance rich can throw
 Round darkest tempests of misfortunes rude,
 As sunshine gives to gloomiest clouds a glow,
 In calm and beauty must that man's life flow,
 Who throneth in his heart a fortitude
 To crush the weaknesses that there intrude.

PERCY RUSSELL.

THE DAYS GONE BY.



WEETER than the spring-time sweetness,
 Brighter than the summer sky,
 Ah, too fleet in fairy fleetness,
 Were the days that are gone by!

I was happy then, for brightly
 Beamed on me each loving eye,
 Sorrow touched my spirit lightly
 In the days that are gone by!

Early friends were then around me,
 Fresh and warm each kindred tie;
 Changeless was the faith that bound me
 To the loved of days gone by!

Oh, their hearts were kindly glowing
 With a love that could not die,
 O'er my life a charm bestowing
 In the days that are gone by!

I have mourned the blossoms scattered
 By the wild wind—fierce and high!
 Now like them, all wreck'd and shattered,
 Lie the hopes of days gone by!

Sweeter than the spring-time sweetness,
 Brighter than the summer sky,
 Ah, too fleet in fairy fleetness,
 Were the days that are gone by!

J. A. D.

LOVE AND THE SHEPHERDESS.

(IMITATED FROM THE LATIN.)



WANDERED into the woods to weep:
 I came to a lone and gloomy grove,
 A beautiful boy lay there asleep,
 The infant god of Love.

I stayed to admire his golden hair,
 His cheeks where red roses with lilies met :
 And I thought of one who was yet more fair,
 Of one I tried to forget.

To my heart my mem'ry of Damon spoke,
 It whispered my love so sadly forsaken,
 I softly sighed, and Love awoke.
 Love is easily waken.

He turned to his side and seized his bow,
 And cried as he shot : "Go back again
 To Damon, and love him for aye. And know
 That Love does not wake in vain."

E. A. MORTON.

A PICTURE,

SKETCHED IN A SMALL COUNTRY TOWN.

LOOK in those eyes where love's self seems to sleep
 And dream of loving. Dreams and does not care
 To wake. Those cheeks where lilies' shadows peep
 Beneath the poppy's hue. Fresh as the air
 She lives on and as pure. More fair than fair ;
 Her face is bright with happiness and life ;
 Her voice is sweet and low. Her mouth, where pearls
 With ruby lips hold everlasting strife,
 Is never close. Adown her back jet curls
 In heavy clusters hang. Her tread is light,
 Her heart is free from passion and from fear.
 She loves the sun, and all that's good and bright,
 She loves the stream, and all that's true and clear,
 She loves the flowers, and loves the fields to roam,
 She loves her God, her widow mother, and her home.

E. A. MORTON.

SUNSET.



SUN is setting, clouds are fretting
 Heaven's blue dome with unshed tears,
 Sorrows of our own begetting
 Look from out the future years ;
 While the Past is past forgetting,
 And the Present full of fears.

Shall we never leave off sighing
 For the pleasures of the Past ?
 Is there nothing satisfying
 Where our lonely lot is cast ?
 Ah ! we seem so long in dying,
 But the end must come at last.

Like frail leaves, the wild winds blowing,
 Closely clinging to the tree—
 So poor mortals, nothing knowing,
 Dread to learn what is to be ;
 Dread Death's scythe the ripe corn mowing,
 Fear to face Eternity.

Are our sorrows worth the grieving,
 When we think our future fate
 May be blissful, past believing,
 If awhile we patient wait ?
 For a rich reward receiving
 Pleasures pure and passionate.

What can wait us after dying,
 But a fuller, freer life,
 Void of sorrow, sin, or sighing,
 Things with which the Past was rife ?
 Or the wearied body lying
 Peaceful after years of strife ?

Let us not give way, despairing,
 While the faintest hope remains :
 But the rather, dangers daring,
 Censure him who first complains ;
 Each the other's burden bearing,
 Bound in love or friendship's chains.

HAROLD THORNTON.

SUNRISE.

DAY is dawning, light of morning
 Combats with retreating night ;
 And the mountain snows adorning,
 Laughing leaps from height to height.

Why should we, all gladness scorning,
 Lift sad eyes toward the light ?

Just because affection, twining
 Round about some thing of clay,
 Meets with no return, repining,
 Shall we waste God's golden day ?
 Still the sun of hope is shining,
 Let us hold, at least, one ray.

Petty cares of life are vexing,
 Greater griefs are hard to bear ;
 And our path is oft perplexing,
 Strewn with sorrows everywhere :
 Let us aid, then, in annexing
 Earth to Heaven by faith and prayer.

Let us cease this constant fretting,
 Bearing bravely bitter woe,
 And each cruel wrong forgetting,
 Clasp the hand of fiercest foe ;
 Ere the sun of life be setting,
 And the harvest lying low.

None can guess the joys awaiting
 Those who struggle to the goal—
 God Himself predestinating,
 And presiding o'er the whole :
 Shall we aid in alienating
 From such bliss a single soul ?

Shall we weary in well-doing ?
 Shall we pause to weep our woes ?
 Or with patient heart pursuing,
 Fight our way through frowning foes,
 To the Throne a pathway hewing,
 Where God's hand the crown bestows ?

HAROLD THORNTON.

LINES CROWDED ON A CARTE DE DANSE.



YES, my darling, you assert,
 As you ever have asserted,
 That you never, never flirt,
 And have never, never flirted.
 Don't imagine, love, I pray,
 That, your loyalty, I doubt it.
 I don't mind your flirting ; nay—
 But, what others think about it !

I expected you'd deny
 Coquetry, you ever show it,
 Conscientiously—and why ?
 You yourself don't even know it !
 Nature destined you to flirt,
 And you cannot do without it ;
 So my feelings are not hurt—
 But, what others think about it !

What is that ?—Do I refer——
 Well, I did for half a minute—
 To that galop with a " Sir ?"
 Dearest, there was nothing in it.
 That's a darling, good you'll be—
 Did I for a moment doubt it ?
 Ever you'll be true to me—
 Think what others like about it !

What's the colour of your dress—
 Crêpe and tulle and satin braiding ?
 " Pink," you say, but I can guess
 What was formerly its shading.
 WHITE its colour was, I think ;
 Artless, spotless, and devout, it
 Blushed, bewildered, into pink
To find so many arms about it !

CYRIL MULLETT..

MILTON AND HIS WORKS.

IN the history of English poetry there are few names that strike more familiarly on the ear than that of Milton.

Many biographers and many critics also have chosen him as their subject; many partial accounts have been given of him and many things have been said against him; let us take some of the facts of his life and a short review of his works, and, having done so, we shall find ourselves in a better position to form our own judgment.

John Milton was born in London, December 9th, 1608. His father belonged to an old Roman Catholic family, but was disinherited for embracing the Protestant faith, and then had recourse, as a means of support, to the profession of a scrivener. There can be little doubt that the example of such a father, who, for religion's sake, had abandoned all, had great influence over the early thoughts and feelings of the son, and that they conduced to render him the stern unflinching advocate and supporter of religious freedom which he afterwards became.

The elder Milton was endowed with considerable musical talent, which descended, in a less degree, to the son.

Macaulay has said that "as civilization advances, poetry almost necessarily declines," and as this is most undoubtedly true, it must be acknowledged that Milton laboured under the disadvantage (to a poet) of a careful and finished education. During his early years his instruction was carried on by private tutors, but at the age of fifteen he was sent to St. Paul's School, London; whilst here he made rapid progress, especially in his classical studies. At the end of two years he became a student of theology at Christ's College, Cambridge; and took his B.A. and M.A. degrees in 1628 and 1632 respectively. He refused however to enter the church, and retired from the University to his father's country house at Horton in Buckinghamshire.

There he continued in seclusion studying classical literature. On the death of his mother, which occurred when Milton had been at home for about five years, he left his father's house, and travelled in France, Switzerland, and Italy for fifteen months. It was during his residence at Rome that he began an acquaintance with Andrew Marvell, which ripened into a life-long friendship.

Whilst at Rome Milton's great and truth-loving soul was stirred within him at the abuses then existing, even in the Vatican itself;

and together with Marvell, he openly inveighed against the superstitions of Rome; and on his return to this country he continued the controversy with the Romanizing party here.

Whilst at Geneva, Milton visited Galileo, then a prisoner of the Inquisition.

In 1643 he married Mary Powell, the daughter of a high cavalier of Oxfordshire. Like his Italian predecessor, Dante, to whom Milton has often been compared, he was unfortunate in his attachments; for within a month after their marriage, his wife went home on a visit to her parents, and refused to return. The reason of this strange conduct appears to have been simply because the studious habits and solitude-loving nature of her chosen husband did not suit the gay disposition of the cavalier's daughter. This desertion by his wife did not last long, for in twelve months she returned, humbled and submissive, and Milton, with great generosity, received her back again.

Now came a time of deep misfortune to Milton; from severe and intense study in his youth his sight had become affected, and during the last ten years it had grown weaker and weaker, till after the composition of his *Defensio Populi* it completely failed, and he became blind, irrevocably blind.

In the same year, 1652, Milton's first wife died, but within a short time he married again, the daughter of a Captain Woodcock; but this attachment was even more unfortunate than the first, for his second choice died within a year. So much for Milton's domestic relations, and now we turn to his public life.

In 1649 he obtained the office of foreign, or Latin secretary to the Government, and whilst discharging the duties accompanying this position, he exerted all the powers of his great genius in defence of republican principles.

Those who decry Cromwell and rank him as a base usurper and an ambitious place-seeker, are accustomed to speak of Milton's alliance with the Protector as something to be marvelled at and deplored; but who, discerning and understanding Milton's great and noble soul, would not rather rejoice at his glorious talents being applied to such glorious ends? Who would not see that of necessity it must have been so, that with a poet's heart burning within him, full of free thoughts, simple and true from his mother nature, his tongue must perforce utter words in defence of liberty, that liberty which was to free the nation from a base and servile submission to a weak and bigoted king?

But it is not our intention to enter here into a criticism of Milton's prose writings, our object is to deal with his poetical works.

One of the earliest of these, *The Hymn on the Nativity*, was written when the poet was only in his twenty-first year, and notwithstanding the youthfulness of the author, it is well worthy of his maturer years, and indeed bears no small resemblance to some of his later productions. Whilst living at his father's country residence, at Horton, he wrote his *Arcades*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas*. The *Arcades* formed part of an entertainment given to the Countess Dowager of Derby, at Harefield, by some members of her own family. In Milton's manuscript this fragment is called a masque, and it was probably finished by other hands. The *Comus*, also a masque, was played before the Earl of Bridgewater, then President of Wales, in the year 1634. The drama was founded upon an accident which happened to some members of the Earl's own family; his two sons, Lord Brackley and Mr. Egerton, and his daughter, Lady Alice Egerton, were benighted in Heywood forest in Herefordshire, and the lady was, for a short time, lost. Upon hearing of the event, Milton, who was staying at the Earl's castle, wrote the masque.

This short but beautiful little drama ranks next, in point of merit, to *Paradise Lost*. Its charm consists in the admirable union of moral truth with all the exquisite imagery of poetry. It would be almost impossible to find a more lovely piece of musical versification than is contained in the following lines; as an example of poetic imagery they are unsurpassed.

“COMUS. The star that bids the shepherd fold,
Now the top of Heav'n doth hold,
And the gilded car of day,
His glowing axle doth delay
In the steep Atlantic stream,
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the east.
Meanwhile welcome joy and feast,
Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity,
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odours, dropping wine.
Rigour now is gone to bed,
And advice with scrupulous head,
Strict age and sour severity
With their grave saws in slumber lie.

We that are of purer fire
 Imitate the starry quire,
 Who in their nightly watchful spheres,
 Lead in swift round the months and years.
 The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
 Now to the moon in wavering morrice move ;
 And on the tawny sands and shelves
 Trip the pert faeries and the dapper elves.
 By dimpled brook and fountain brim,
 The wood-nymphs deck'd with daisies trim,
 Their merry wakes and pastimes keep :
 What hath night to do with sleep ?”

Another passage of unparalleled beauty is the song of Sabrina ; she rises, attended by water nymphs, and sings :—

“By the rushy-fringed bank,
 Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
 My sliding chariot stays,
 Thick set with agate, and the azure sheen
 Of turkois blue, and emerald green,
 That in the channel strays ;
 Whilst from off the waters fleet
 Thus I set my printless feet
 O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
 That bends not as I tread ;
 Gentle Swain, at thy request,
 I am here.”

The concluding lines sum up *the moral*, which has been running sweetly and delicately through the whole poem ; they are exquisitely lovely.

“Love Virtue ; she alone is free,
 She can teach ye how to climb
 Higher than the sphery chime ;
 Or if Virtue feeble were,
 Heav'n itself would stoop to her.”

The next poem in point of order is *Lycidas* ; it was written in memory of Edward King, an intimate friend of the author. The unfortunate young man perished by shipwreck, in a voyage to Dublin.

The monody itself partakes of the nature of an allegory, and in it the ruin of the corrupted clergy was foretold.

Milton's descriptive poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, are generally announced to have been written at the same period of his life ; but a careful perusal leads to the belief that they were at any rate sketched, if not fully completed, while he was at college, and himself trod the “studious cloisters pale” amidst “storied windows” and “pealing anthems.”

And now we come to the poem which makes our author rank with Homer as an epic poet.

Paradise Lost was not a brilliant inspiration poured forth with haste; it was the outcome of long and solitary communion with his own spirit, and of a bold facing of the truth—it was rather the settling down and arranging of a vast concourse of glorious thoughts and visions, which had long been growing and developing in his mind.

Paradise Lost was begun in 1658, a time when the sharing of the secretaryship with Andrew Marvell, left Milton more leisure for his private literary pursuits. It was finished in 1665, at a cottage at Chalfont in Bucks; the poet was then close upon sixty, so that the whole of the poem was written in his declining years, and when his sight was entirely gone.

“Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us and regain the blissful seat,
Sing Heav’nly muse.”

These first few lines serve to show the subject matter of the poem, and the appropriateness and merit of the introduction cannot fail to attract our attention.

The first book notices briefly the whole incidents of man’s fall and his loss thereby of Paradise, which was his first abode; then passes lightly over the causes of that fall, and shows us Satan, “the infernal serpent,” the “arch enemy,” who, setting himself in glory above his peers, and thinking to have equalled the Most High, is driven from Heaven by legions of soldiers, and hurled headlong down to bottomless perdition.

The whole description of the fall of the angels and of the bottomless chaos into which they were cast, is perhaps the sublimest picture which human imagination has ever produced.

After a certain space Satan recovers from the utter astonishment and confusion which were felt at first, and gathers around him all his companions in the miserable fall. They confer together of their position, the great Arch-Fiend addresses them and tells them of a new creature to be created, according to an old report in Heaven. To find out the truth of this report a full council is determined on:

“A solemn council, forthwith to be held
At Pandemonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers.”

The second book continues to relate the proposals made in council, and the resolution finally adopted.

Some propose that an attempt be made to regain heaven, others disapprove of this, and at last the tradition concerning the other world is again mentioned, and it is decided to search into the truth of it.

But who shall be sent on this perilous search? Satan the chief undertakes the voyage alone, and goes forth on his journey. He reaches the gates of Hell:

“Thrice threefold the gates : threefolds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable shape.”

By the forms (typifying sin and death), he is at first refused admittance, but they at length open to him and disclose an interminable gulf, through which, with great difficulty he passes, directed by Chaos, who shows him the new world, the object of his search.

There can be little doubt that Milton took his general ideas of heaven, hell, and Satan, the satisfaction of divine justice, &c., from the Apocryphal portions of the Bible, which were written after the Jews' return from the Babylonish captivity, during which period—partly from their intercourse with the Persians—their ideas of a personal embodiment of evil had become more fixed and definite. This fact shows itself very clearly in the third book, in which the poet represents God as seeing Satan flying toward the newly-formed world, and describes Him as foretelling the future success of the great adversary of mankind, yet clearing His own wisdom and justice by proclaiming man's free-will and ability to withstand the tempter. Sitting at the right hand of the Father is the Son, and to Him the Almighty turns and declares that grace cannot be extended to man without the satisfaction of divine justice.

The Son offers himself freely, the sacrifice is accepted, and the Incarnation ordained. In the meantime Satan has descended upon the “firm spacious globe of this round world.”

Next follows a description of *limbo*; in this Milton has been greatly reprobated by Addison and others, but the design of this poem together with its character must be remembered. From this place, since styled the Limbo of Vanity, Satan's ascent to heaven's gates and thence to the orb of the sun is described.

He meets with Uriel, regent of the sun, and assuming a desire to behold the new creation, he is directed by him to the abode of man.

At first he holds converse with himself, much doubting, envying, fearing, but at length strengthens himself in evil and pursues his way to paradise. Then comes a beautiful description of the garden of Eden and his first sight of Adam and Eve. Satan overhears their conversation and understanding from it that the tree of knowledge was forbidden them for food, he determines to entice them into disobedience; then leaves them awhile. Gabriel, being warned by Uriel, sends down two angels to guard Adam and Eve during the night, and they surprise Satan tempting Eve in a dream. He is unwillingly taken to Gabriel, prepares for resistance, but hindered by heaven, flies away. Thus ends book iv.

Books v., vi., vii., and viii. are occupied with the account of an interview between Adam and the angel Raphael, who is sent by God to remind man once more of his obedience and his free estate, and to warn him of the enemy close at hand.

Raphael discourses with Adam on the origin of his enemy, relates his revolt and subsequent destruction, and at Adam's request tells him how and why the earth was first created. Adam in his turn recites to the angel his recollections since his own creation, his talk with God, his meeting with Eve, &c., and after again warning him the angel departs.

Book ix. begins with the return of the enemy who enters paradise by night and passes into the body of the serpent; then is portrayed his finding the woman alone, his flattery of her, his subtile conversation, and finally his prevailing on her to eat the forbidden fruit.

Books x. and xi. show the effects of Adam and Eve's transgression and the descent of sin and death into the world.

Satan goes back to Pandemonium, but is ill received by his fellow-conspirators.

The Son of God presents to His Father the prayers of our now repenting parents; they are accepted, but God declares that they must no longer remain in paradise.

Michael and a band of angels are sent to drive them out; he leads Adam up to a high hill and shows him in a vision all the events which will happen until the flood. He then relates what shall succeed the flood, and reveals to Adam the incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of that seed of the woman which was promised to them at the fall.

Then chastened and subdued but somewhat comforted by the angel's words, Adam rejoins Eve and they are led forth from paradise by Michael.

Thus ends a poem which for beautiful imagery, harmony of versification, grand ideas and moral goodness, has not its equal in any language. Its fame will live ages after the names of its critics have been erased from memory's page never again to be revived; so we will leave it, adding nothing and detracting nothing from its true worth.

In his companion poem, *Paradise Regained*, Milton is not generally considered to have been successful, but this circumstance seems partly owing to the fact that the second poem has never been so much studied as the first. For every nine readers who know and love *Paradise Lost*, there will be perhaps only one who has thoroughly mastered *Paradise Regained*.

We have not here space nor time enough to enter accurately into the details of the poem, but its subject is the life of our Lord until the temptation, the account of which occupies the greater part of the whole of the four books.

The general execution of the subject to be worked out is decidedly imperfect, but I am disposed to consider it to be as a whole much less defective than is commonly believed. In addition to the poems we have already mentioned, Milton wrote *Samson Agonistes*, which, though possessed of unusual merit, is ill adapted to theatrical representation.

We must now come to the death of our poet, which took place at his own house in Bunhill Row in 1674.

He was laid to his rest in St. Giles's Church, Cripplegate; a monument to his memory was erected there, and another in Westminster Abbey.

In private life Milton is said to have been of a serene and cheerful disposition; he was strictly sober and temperate as became a student and philosopher, and his chief relaxation consisted of music and conversation. But whatever may be thought and said of his domestic character, few will deny him the right to the title of "greatest of our epic poets."

ZOPF.

THE GRAVE AMID THE SNOWS.

AN ARCTIC MEMORY.



AR 'mid the frost-chained ocean,
A noble band and brave
Gathered in deep emotion
Around their leader's grave.

Cold was the couch and dreary
That held that honoured guest ;
'Mid deserts waste and weary
They laid him to his rest.
Not 'neath the rolling billow
Whereon he loved to dwell ;
Hard is his frozen pillow,
Silent his narrow cell.
No stately sculpture raises
Its marble o'er the dead,
And never England's daisies
Shall spring above his head ;
No gentle aspens quiver,
No drooping willows wave,
Deep in the tideless river
They made the seaman's grave.
The boundless ice-fields glitter—
The cruel north wind blows—
To him they are not bitter,
He sleeps amid the snows !
But as they stand surrounding
That grave so still and lone,
Forth from their prison bounding,
Those mourners' thoughts have flown ;
Recalling, fondly, sadly,
The visions of that day,
When from Old England gladly
The good ships took their way.
When forth they proudly started,
Followed by loving eyes,
Bearing the eager-hearted
To win the long-sought prize.
All dark forebodings spurning,
As kindly voices came,
Wishing a swift returning,
Crowned with success and fame.
Ah ! were there none divining
How life and hope should close,
Where the midnight sun is shining
O'er the silence of the snows !

They pile the ice above him
With cold and trembling hand,
Far from the hearts that love him,
Far from his native land.
But could they see the morrow
Fate holds for them in store,
Transient would be their sorrow
For him that is no more.
For while he safe reposes,
Untouched by want or care,
The hopeless winter closes,
Dark as their own despair.
How their sad hearts would treasure
The sights and sounds of yore,
The water's rippling measure,
The sunny verdant shore!
For grim Disease hath found them,
And hunger sharper grows,
While pitiless surround them
The never-ceasing snows!
Kindly was death's forestalling!
Well that their noble chief
Saw not his heroes falling,
Marked not their bitter grief!
Yet though in life they sever,
Not in our thoughts they part,
We hold them, linked for ever,
Deep in the nation's heart.
And Fame's bright wreaths are crowning
The wastes where they repose,
'Mid the mighty icebergs frowning
O'er the silence of the snows!
What though the Northern Ocean
Enshroud them in its gloom?
A woman's deep devotion
Has tracked them to the tomb.
Though many a pile of glory
The weight of years has bowed,
Though names once high in story
Are lost amid the crowd;

While northern winds come sweeping,
 We know the way they went;
 The Polar seas are keeping
 Their iceberg monument.
 Trophies of softer regions
 May yield to moth or rust,
 Time's hand, or war's fierce legions,
 May lay them in the dust.
 But change or spoiler never
 That icy desert knows,
 It keeps their fame for ever
 Eternal as its snows !

F. YOUNG.

 THE FUTURE.

IT was good, it was kind, of the wise One above
 To fling destiny's veil o'er the face of our years;
 That we dread not the blow which shall strike at our love,
 And expect not the beam which shall dry up our tears.

Did we know that the voices now gentle and bland,
 Would forego the fond word and the whispering tone;
 Did we know that the eager and warm-pressing hand
 Would be joyfully forward in casting the stone;

Did we know the affection engrossing our breast
 Would end, as it oft does, in madness and pain;
 That the passionate heart does but hazard its rest,
 To be wrecked on the shore it is panting to gain;

Oh! did we but know of the shadows so nigh,
 The world would indeed be a prison of gloom:
 All light would be quench'd in youth's eloquent eye,
 And the pray'r-lisping infant would ask for the tomb.

Yes, 'tis well that the Future is hid from our sight,
 That we walk in the sunbeam, nor dream of the cloud,
 That we cherish a flow'r and think not of blight,
 That we sport with the loom that may weave us a shroud.

MOWBRAY.

THE REBELS.

SCENE.—*A deep and rocky valley, overtopped by snow-capped mountains. The sun has set.*

CYNE (*alone*).

DALE moon, whose pity-lending eye
Looks down on me, and weeps its tears
O'er my past lack of loving years,
And at the agonizing sigh
That wrung me when no love was mine;
Raise thy bright face athwart the sky,
And let it now so brightly shine,
That infant Love may be all loath to die.

SPIRIT OF DESTINY.

A human love is thine : thy infant heart
Has learnt the deepest lore that men can learn ;
And the tight tendons of thy earthly frame,
Distent with fullest life, are quivering
And stretched. Thy love I cannot doom to death ;
But One is jealous. Happiness for thee
Is an untasted dainty till the day,
When thou upon thy bended knee shall cry,
Repentant, "God of Heaven ! I pray to Thee."

CYNE.

I cannot whisper "I believe ;" and faith
Is unaccustomed labour of deceit.
I have no faith, save in the mountain flower
That calls me Cyne, and that I can see :
And here I am, a rebel 'gainst the idea
That thou call'st God. Grim Spirit, if thy work
Be to destroy the soul of unbelief,
I must engage thee. Love and I alone
Will dare the wrath of thine avenging hand,
And vanquish Fate. Destruction is thy weapon :
But Love will blunt its point ! and my right arm
Shall cut its way to peace in spite of God
And all His phantom forces of the air.

SPIRIT OF THE WIND.

I hate the day and love the night;
 Cold darkness is my best delight,
 And I run ever
 My whistling course o'er hill and heath,
 A panting giant out of breath,
 Whom gods may never
 Entrap and cage within four walls,
 Or fetter in restraining thralls
 I cannot sever.
 I come as spirit-burning gall,
 For I am free!
 My home is heaven's roofless hall,
 And tyranny
 I hate and slay by night and day;
 My floating cloak is bloody-red;
 I will not rest, nor heed nor stay
 Till tyranny is dead.

SPIRIT OF DESTINY.

Mortal, thou hast a weak ally. The wind
 Is come and gone again: to seek its path
 Would be but madness. Go upon thy knees,
 And, trusting nought but God, say, "I believe."

CYNE.

What is man, the lord of earth?
 A sigh that only lives for birth;
 A worm that crawls a mountain-side;
 A rose-leaf on the heaving tide;
 An atom in a world-wide span,
 But still a world himself is man.
 Yes, Spirit, I am still, indeed, a world,
 And Rhodope, my heart's love, is another.
 Together we revolve, and our joined force,
 But little though it be, shall strive with thine.
 Call up thy dastard legions of the air,
 And bid them strike, and Love shall blunt their steel.

SPIRIT OF EVIL.

Beware, beware! unwitting fool,
 Her eyes are but a sunlit pool:

In new delight you fondly stare,
And, gazing, think that you are there.

CYNE.

Curst Spirit, spend thy sneers on other loves :
I will not hear thee.

List ! I see her come.

RHODOPE (*not observing him*).

Oh ! aim of upward-gazing eyes,
Still witness of a world of sighs ;
Come, tell me, from thy throne above,
Has sorrow sought my absent love ?
Will memory betray the tale
I told him till his promise fail ?
Have spectre doubts and phantom fears
Wrung out his loving heart in tears ?
Nay, nay, sweet star, I trust and trow ;
But whisper me, for thou must know.

SPIRIT OF HOPE (*answering from a star*).

Every world in space revolving,
Sullenly, alone,
Witlessly the problem solving
Of a human groan,
Answers : "There is end to sorrow ;
'Tis not always night :
Every evening has its morrow
Borne on floods of light."

(CYNE, *discovers himself*.)

RHODOPE

Oh, joy ! I knew my trust was worthy of thee,
And that thy word was worthy of my trust.

CYNE.

Every heart has chambers twain,
One for Joy and one for Pain.
When wan Pain his vigil keeps
Red-lipped Joy in silence sleeps ;

And when Pain in sorrow rests
 Joy is bright with dimpled jests.
 Whisper then, dear Joy, and take
 Heed lest pale-faced Pain awake.

SPIRIT OF DESTINY.

Believe! believe! The night grows on apace,
 And time is short. Believe! or happiness,
 Half carried to your lips, shall spill and turn
 Into an all-consuming flame of liquid fire.

CYNE.

Nay! listen, Spirit, if thy greediness
 Can wait and sip an ocean-drop of Time,
 Before its base desire and wanton will
 Must work revenge on unbelieving souls.
 So near and yet so distant, Love and I
 Were hidden from each other; but each ear
 Could hear the breathing of the other's sigh,
 And mark the falling of a rebel tear.
 If such be so, and so it is, I swear,
 Why should we 'gainst thy tyranny beware?

SPIRIT OF DESTINY.

Fond fools! Why struggle in my mighty hands?
 This human love is powerless to save.

CYNE.

Our doom is sounded, Rhodope. To die
 Is but to turn aside from one old path
 Into an unknown way. Perchance the stones
 Are not more rugged, and perchance the flowers
 Have better sweetness on this road of death.
 But who shall say? Come, love, embrace me now.
 We have not conquered here, for the cold sweat
 Of life's cool evening mists has chilled my brow.
 Red lips are waiting for me, my love,
 Lips that are sweeter than wine,
 Lips that are pouting and free, my love,
 Lips that shall ever be mine.

RHODOPE.

Will Love come with us to the spectral land?

CYNE (*rising and supporting her*).

It will! And by its aid our victory
Shall be assured.

Curst shade of Destiny!

Pursue us now. Our souls, together twined,
Speed upward into liberty. Thy hounds
May bark and bellow, and their bloody fangs
May gnaw the darkness: but our souls are free.

Come, Love! The star that whispered thee of hope
Shall be our mansion: and the mother moon,
Calm confidant of mine and thine, shall be
Our sympathiser to eternity. (*They die.*)

W. LAIRD-CLOWES.

WATCHING AND WAITING.

BY her chamber window kneeling,
Blue eyes dim with falling tears,
While the twilight shadows stealing
Whisper of departed years

When the love-light lingering left her,
And the deepening darkness reft her
Of the One her heart reveres.

Three long years have passed in sorrow,
But she waits and watches yet;
Maybe he will come to-morrow
Ere another sun hath set,

And the words in anger spoken,
With the vows that he hath broken,
She will all forgive—forget.

LIFE.

THIS surely strange that all beneath the sky
Is born to bloom, to wither, and to die;
Unnumbered hearts have throbbed with longing life,
But death's cold hand has ever closed the strife;
It seems not so in the ethereal plains,
There peace, perennial peace, serenely reigns;

We see no furrow on the moon's fair face,
She smiles as ever in the sun's embrace.
The stars still watch the world with golden eyes
As clear as when they shrunk from Cain's sad cries ;
The angels seated at the Saviour's tomb,
Blushed with rare beauty and sweet youthful bloom,
Though they had sung when from dark dismal night
They saw the world arise with wings of light :
There was a time when earth held not a grave,
No groan had mingled with the wailing wave,
No tear had trembled on a human face,
For God walked gladly with his new-made race.
When Adam kissed the lovely lips of Eve,
He little thought that she would sorely grieve,
That all his sons who sprung on earth's broad breast
Must sink to sleep, and in her arms seek rest.
The poet gazing in this awful tomb,
Sees germs of glorious life and beauteous bloom.
The lips which cannot lie were here one day,
Wooing this wandering world from sin's sad way ;
With tearful eyes He lifted up His voice
Crying, " Dear lost one, let thy heart rejoice ;
We missed thee much within the happy home,
And wondered why thou wouldst from Father roam.
Come, take my hand and let me lead thee back,
For thou art blind and canst not trace the track.
I left a countless throng within the fold,
Walking with God along the streets of gold ;
But all the music waits till thy lost voice
Shall start the song to make the home rejoice ;
Listen, thou loved one, do not fear the rod,
For there are tears upon the face of God,
Whose sleepless longing eyes are looking still,
Hoping to see thee coming up the hill.
The best robe gleameth near the pearly gate,
Waiting alone for thee, oh ! don't be late !
I came below to fold thee on my breast,
And with sweet peace give thy sore spirit rest ;
Full soon thy surging soul with joy shall hear
The bells all ringing when we both appear.

When Father sees us He will gladly run,
 To welcome home His loved and long-lost son ;
 But when with joy He will thy form embrace,
 He cannot speak till He hath kissed thy face."
 The Poet pauses, musing in his mind,
 Wondering if God would win all human-kind ;
 Perchance the Prodigal He seeks to save
 Is this wild world fast marching to the grave ;
 'Twas on this earth the Son in darkness died,
 'Twas here that flowed His living crimson tide,
 The loving drops fell freely from His face,
 To seek the sin and save the ruined race.
 The stream that sprung from Jesus' sacred breast,
 Ran to the ground to give this sad earth rest ;
 Creation's groans, thank God, shall some day cease,
 And every tongue shall praise the Prince of Peace !

DAVID DROFFO:

DANTE.

THERE are few men who afford a more interesting subject for our consideration than Dante, the Italian poet, the Titanic intellect of the middle ages. He was one of those human spirits whom we contemplate with a kind of unintelligible awe, and who dwell apart in a state of unapproachable isolation and mysterious grandeur. There are very few men whose intellectual bequest to mankind has been the occasion of such erudite assiduity and speculation—such metaphysical and theological and scientific disquisitions—such an intimidating multiplicity of commentaries, essays, dissertations, and translations—such bewildering contributions of literary ingenuity, and such a heterogeneous accumulation of critical rubbish.

A plain common mind becomes actually darkened and perplexed by its very abundance ; and, in endeavouring to extract some little light and guidance towards a clear and intelligible knowledge of the man and his work, it requires a careful, solemn exercise of those judicial faculties which God has given us, and of that patience which is such a conspicuous attribute of the Christian spirit.

It is hardly probable that we shall be able, within the space of an ordinary article in a review, to do justice to the character or the writings of this mysterious and melancholy soul whose transcendent

depth men have been trying for the last six centuries, with what zealous assiduity and comprehensive erudition they possessed, to understand, and whose sublime and majestic utterances the most learned and accomplished of his fellow-countrymen, thirty years after his death, were engaged to expound in brilliant temples, in academical institutions, in scholastic retreats.

In order to understand this Dante—in order to have some intelligible conception of his “Mystic Unfathomable Song,” it seems to be the general opinion of those who have most lovingly and assiduously brooded over its difficulties and beauties, that you must place yourself in thought in that period of rough culture in which Dante lived. You must be acquainted with that bewildering multiplicity of characters who crowd upon you in every page of his immortal poem; you must have a pretty extensive acquaintance with the political and ecclesiastical personages of that time, with the domestic dissensions, with the municipal quarrels and disorders of his native city; you must know something of Pagan mythology; you must have a thorough knowledge of the scholastic divinity, the theology, the philosophy, the astronomy, the superstitions, the manners and customs—yea, even the entire life of the Middle Ages. For Dante is the vivid embodiment of the Middle Ages.

All the hopes, and woes, and opinions, and miseries, and passions, and vicissitudes, and eternal yearnings, and wisdom, and Religion of that time, are condensed into his soul—are expressed in the immortal breathings of his spirit. “The Thought they lived by stands here in everlasting music.”

If it requires such an extensive amount of knowledge, intellectual industry, calm judgment, and profound thought, to understand his work, it would be a display of extravagant presumption on our part if we professed to reveal, in this brief examination, with adequate justice, the unfathomable wonders of this man’s spirit.

We may possibly be able to give some faint idea of what kind of man he was—what were the prominent affections of his nature, and projects of his existence—how the rough world used the colossal countryman, and how the brutal ingratitude of his townsmen afflicted the poet’s heart.

To understand adequately his greatness and grandeur, and, probably, to some considerable extent his strength, we must know something about the times in which he lived. It was not a period of effeminacy or sentimentalism—of simpering madrigals or gushing effusions to

some visionary beauty. The whole of Europe was but in a state of incipient civilization. But still a spirit of energy was awakened. The Crusades did a great deal towards that. There had not been much intellectual progress hitherto. The art of printing had not been discovered, and, therefore, all those ineffable blessings which that invention had introduced, were unknown. English barons had a very faint dream of the comforts, and refinements, and enjoyments in which their descendants would be enveloped. They lived in rooms strewn with rushes; and the advantages of education were so little known, needed, or appreciated, that few of them could sign their names in any other fashion than by the scientific process of making a cross. But in Italy especially of all the countries of Europe there was a complete resurrection of the powers of the human mind. There was plenty of tumult, abundance of quarrels, and political and social animosities were exhibited with the bitterest acrimony. Feudal lords—the remnants of some German Hubert or Teutonic potentate—had for some time been having their stately castles with inexorable determination demolished by the inhabitants of those petty republics; they themselves were reluctantly amalgamated with the citizens; and strifes of tragic violence were going on almost continually with increasing bitterness between the discordant elements of the different cities.

Italy at that time was a net-work of petty republics, enjoying unlimited freedom, full of ambition, of audacity, of life, of party-spirit. The whole of the country was not merely agitated with continual conflicts between one of those little republics and another, but between the different factions themselves of which each city was composed. Florence, in which Dante was born, was the proudest, the most ambitious, and the most restless and audacious of the whole lot. She kept spreading out her ambitious arms, extending her increasing frontier, and multiplying her resources and dependents, notwithstanding the wishes, the interests, the prohibitions even of the German Emperor. She increased in wealth, in importance, and in all the elements of secular grandeur and authority; but between the feudal nobles who had been reluctantly incorporated with the body of citizens and the people themselves an inexorable feeling of jealousy and hatred sprang up, and unseemly discords now and then were the inevitable result; sometimes between one feudal family and another. Exactly half a century before the great poet was born, in the year 1215, a quarrel of contemptible origin sprang up between two of those great families, which did not merely involve in in-

numerable afflictions the whole Florentine community, but affected the whole fabric of society throughout central Italy.

There was an old aristocratic family called Buondelmonti, who seventy years before had, with prompt determination, been deprived of their feudal stronghold, and been reluctantly incorporated in the democratic community of Florence—a branch of which family had reached Corsica, and became founders of the Bonapartes, who have left a very significant trace of their existence in the world. Young Buondelmonti, with his spirit swelling with feudal arrogance, stabbed another young nobleman, Oddo d'Arrigo, who was equally exulting in ancestral pretensions. As some kind of recompense and solace to the troubled feelings of Oddo's friends, he agreed to marry his handsome niece. But this interfered with the matrimonial projects of Lady Donati, another family that was wrapping itself up in ancestral associations, and anxious to accumulate additions of this world's wealth and splendour. She had a daughter of celebrated beauty, whom she had specially nursed in domestic retirement for the young Buondelmonti. The day before the intended marriage she invited him into her mansion, revealed to him her treasured descendant, and persuaded him to abandon his former choice and accept her daughter. He yielded to her seductive allurements. The very next day, amidst the festivities of Easter Sunday, was insultingly chosen for the union. On their return from church, the heartless bridegroom was murdered, and feelings of inextinguishable bitterness were excited amongst the different partizans.

Historians tell us that this was the origin of the destructive, world-famous conflicts between the Guelfs and Ghibbelines—between the supporters of the German Emperor in opposition to the ambitious pretensions of the Papacy. The Ghibbelines were the old Imperial nobles, and formed the aristocracy of the social body, were naturally Imperialist in their sympathies, and since the days of Hildebrand there had been continual conflicts between the Emperor and the Pope; and all kinds of inextinguishable discords had been awakened throughout the whole social fabric. During the generation preceding Dante's, Frederic II. spent his whole life in endeavouring to crush the indomitable ambition of those Papal potentates; and yet if any man could be expected to yield with complacent obedience to their wishes, and zealously promote their avaricious schemes of aggrandizement, it must be he; for he was, as it were, the nursling of the Church: his mother had been a nun, brought from her devoted seclusion for the very purpose of producing an Imperial champion in the Papal cause: and

yet he was ever the Pope's most indomitable, bitterest, and most dangerous opponent. He was eminently distinguished for his learning, his bravery, and his accomplishments; "a poet in an age of schoolmen, a philosopher in an age of monks, a statesman in an age of Crusaders." Innocent IV., while a fugitive at Lyons, could not forbear hurling his helpless anathemas against him; but his miserable imprecations and invectives only encouraged the Emperor's friends in Florence to adopt as their rallying cry: "*Viva Parte Ghibbelina*," while their adversaries in the city adopted the "*Parte Guelfe*," or that of the Church—not from any profound love for the majestic establishment, but because it was in direct and bitter antagonism to the Emperor and his adherents.

One might occupy much time in expatiating on the terrible tumults between those two parties, and on the overwhelming troubles which they brought upon Florence and the Italian nation. Sometimes the Guelfs were banished, sometimes the Ghibbelines, and their property confiscated, their dwellings destroyed, and every vestige of their existence was wiped away; but they generally appeared again ere long in some formidable form. Five years before Dante was born there was fought between the two parties one of the bitterest and most memorable battles in Florentine history—the battle of Montaperti, in which the Ghibbelines were assisted by Manfred, Frederic II.'s natural son. That was the saddest day the young community had hitherto experienced. Every house had sent forth at least one combatant; and on the night of the conflict, there was hardly a house but exhibited a scene of woe and desolation. The Ghibbelines, who had been the exiled, were triumphant; but when they returned to the city they found their own palaces in ruins, and fair Florence little better than a desert. In order to promote the objects of their party, and to prevent its being any more a refuge for the supporters of the Church, it was proposed to reduce the city to ashes: though Farinata degli Uberti opposed the atrocious proposition with all the energy of his exalted soul, and all the proud fervour of his scornful spirit: and no one was entitled to speak with more legitimate decision, for it was through his sagacity and courage that they had been able to obtain the victory, and get into their hands the coveted treasure. The Guelfs had fled from Florence to Lucca. They were also compelled to abandon that refuge, and flee across the terrible Apennines, and many of the Guelf ladies, amid the fatigues and hardships of the way, gave birth to children on the mountains. It

was somewhat difficult to find a refuge which was comparatively free from the Guelf-Ghibbeline party conflicts. In the very year that the poet was born, the Ghibbelines sustained a terrible defeat, Manfred, their great chieftain, was slain and the fortunes of the Church were again in the ascendant.

The poet was born amidst scenes of this kind, and during his whole life-time the same desolating party-conflicts were continued, although under different names. But amidst all these distracting tumults, people grew rich, and towns grew large, and commerce flourished, and begging friars rambled about the country, and Benedictine monks lived in a kind of feudal exclusiveness and grandeur. St. Francis had just been diffusing his new nostrums, and St. Dominic had recently arrived from Spain, determined to promote his system by a sanguinary Mahometan method: and Matthew of Paris, who was contemporary with those two ecclesiastical celebrities, will rather startle you with his account of the vices and excesses of the religious orders of his time. The Mendicants were vaunting their antiquated visions, and originating heresies of a sacrilegious character. The Inquisitors were pretty active in burning astrologers and magicians, but were occasionally successfully accused of similar practices themselves; and every now and then an extra dash of interest and horror was given to social movements by a tragedy of terrific atrocity; while a gloomy feeling of fanaticism covered the whole Italian people like a sombre robe. And yet, during the age of Dante, it was a period of immense activity, of vivacity, of power, of splendour, and of wealth. Venice, Genoa, Pisa, had become great cities of maritime vigour and importance, in each of which merchants were accumulating princely acquisitions. Florence was increasing in its woollen manufactures and bankers. Architectural structures were proceeding which have excited the rapture of an admiring posterity. And a few kindred spirits of lofty aspirations and immortal hopes were cheering Dante in difficulties and troubles. Cimabue was astonishing and delighting the eyes of his fellow-citizens by an approach to correctness of design and a brilliancy of colour up to that time unknown and unimagined. His glory was eclipsed though by that of his disciple, Dante's intimate friend, Giotto, who, from figuring the sheep which it was his business to tend, became the best painter that Italy had produced; and one of the most valuable of the treasures which he has bequeathed to posterity is the celebrated portrait of Dante. One of his first essays, when he began to study under Cimabue, was to paint a fly on the nose of one of his master's

portraits, which the deluded artist attempted to brush off with his hand. Amongst his few literary friends none was more esteemed and loved than Guido Cavalcanti, a richly-cultivated, dignified, scornful spirit, fond of solitude and philosophical speculations, and brooding over poetical compositions as he walked lonely amid the clang of arms and the confusion of party broils in the streets of Florence; and then his dear Casella, whom he met, and "wooed to sing in the milder shades of Purgatory," an intimate friend of Dante, who by his distinguished musical skill used to refresh the poet's weary spirit, and solace his troubled soul amid the harrowing disappointments of his life. And these were the friends of Dante; and this was the age of Dante; this was the kind of world into which he was born. But there were other spirits living in the world at that time, whose labours have been of considerable interest and benefit to their fellow-men. It was the age of Roger Bacon, of Albertus Magnus, of Buonaventura, of Thomas Aquinas, of Duns Scotus, of Thomas the Rhymer, of Marco Polo, of Sir William Wallace, and of Edward the First. And amidst all the feuds and cruelties and ambitions and revolutionary elements of that time, it was a good and wholesome time nevertheless. The finest works of imagination have always been produced in such periods of political convulsion. The fervid and exuberant vitality of such seasons always rouses up to activity souls of transcendent depth and vigour, and develops and ennobles the highest sensibilities of their nature.

It is exactly 608 years ago this last month of May since Dante Alighieri was born. It is not necessary to trouble ourselves much about his pedigree; for at the best it is but a doubtful kind of lustre which is shed upon a man's history by that. In his *Convito* he says: "Behold, how many are deceived who, being born of illustrious ancestors, and descended from excellent parents, deem themselves noble, when they have no nobility in them!"

It would be of little consequence to us to know whether his mother had been dressed in a close gown of scarlet cloth of Ypres, with a mantel lined with fur, and a hood to it, to cover her interesting head, as was the custom amongst the better class of Florentine women of that age; or whether her body were clad in a coarse gown of Cambrai, as the more humble classes were wont to adorn themselves. There was one of his ancestors named Cacciaguida, who was the father of his great-grandfather, if we can manage to realize that relationship. If we want to know more about him, we must read cantos

xv. and xvi. of Dante's "Paradiso," where we will find a celebrated description of what the poet considered to be the golden age of his native city, in its primitive simplicity, before the introduction of such enervating influences as refinement and wealth: but later generations have, with the fondest sympathies of their nature, brooded over the poet's own age as the veritable golden period of Italian history. Cacciaguinda married a lady from Ferrara, named Alighieri, and that is how the poet's surname grew. After his marriage, this saintly relative was seized with the religious epidemic of the time—joined Conrad III. in his expedition to the Holy Land to dispossess the unhallowed heretics; was knighted there by the German Emperor for his services; but never returned to his dear Alighieri more. His soul was "disentangled from the treacherous world, whose base affection many a spirit soils."

*"Quivi fu'io da quella gente turpa
Disviluppato dal mondo fallace
Il cui amor molte anime deturpa,
E venni dal martirio a questa pace."*

And from that martyrdom Dante translates him to the enjoyment of heavenly peace.

Dante's paternal ancestor, who was a lawyer, died before his child was able to estimate the loss; but his mother, fortunately, was able to recognize to some considerable extent the vital realities of the time. She took care that her son should accumulate what erudition the most distinguished scholastic establishments were able to communicate. There could not be, as in our age, a bewildering multiplicity of books; for the difficulty of copying them was an overpowering hindrance towards an extensive circulation.

But he applied himself to the acquisition of intellectual treasures with such unremitting zeal and determination, that he injured his eyesight; and he stored his mind with the school-divinity, the Aristotelian logic, and Latin classical lore of that time, and metaphysical and philosophical acquirements. He studied at the principal Universities of his own country, which were the most distinguished in Europe, at Paris, and also, it is said, at Oxford. His memory was very great, so was his imagination, so was his judgment. Boccaccio says, that in a school of theologians at Paris, he recited fourteen questions of different men of worth, and in different manners, with their arguments *pro* and *contra* held by the proponents, without leaving any interval, collected and in order as they had been put.

Then, following the same order, subtly solving and answering the contrary arguments, which thing was reputed almost a miracle by all the bystanders. All the accomplishments of the age he cultivated, and all the exercises befitting a youth of his character and position he did not neglect.

Brunetto Latini, one of the most learned men of the age, was his chief instructor—whom Villani seems to consider to have been instrumental in improving the morality, in refining the speech, and otherwise favourably influencing the character of the tumultuous Florentines. One of Dante's sonnets is addressed to him in a somewhat humorous vein; and it is quite a novelty to hear from him a few cheerful utterances of sprightly vivacity. Not that his youth was at all characterized by any extravagant gravity or unmannerly sadness—at least, he was particularly fond of music and song; while the friendship of such companions as his "dear Casella" was affectionately cultivated.

But during the whole of his mature life he brooded over the realities of the present, and over dreams of the unseen future, with a stern, indomitable kind of melancholy. Even at meals he was absent. With sardonic bitterness he watched the humorous subserviency of parasites and buffoons, and not the most laughter-inspiring spectacle could divert his attention from a work in which his newly-awakened fancy was absorbed.

"Seldom he smiled;

And smiled in such a sort as if he mocked himself,

And scorned his spirit that could be moved to smile at anything."

His humorous sonnet to Brunetto, whose genuineness Fraticelli has questioned, has been translated thus:

"Master Brunetto, this I send entreating
 Ye'll entertain this lass of mine at Easter;
 She does not come among you as a feaster;
 No: she has need of reading, not of eating.
 Nor let her find you at some merry meeting,
 Laughing amidst buffoons and drollers, lest her
 Wise sentence should escape a noisy jester;
 She must be wooed, and is well worth the weeting.
 If in this sort you fail to make her out,
 You have amongst you many sapient men,
 All famous as was Albert of Cologne.
 I have been posed amid that learned rout.

And if they cannot spell her right, why then
Call Master Giano, and the deed is done."

But towards the close of the ninth year of his worldly existence, a bright little vision of beauty, innocence and virtue, and all the attributes of human perfection, in fact, flashed before him, and almost convulsed his young soul with rapture and misery of most exquisite refinement. In fact, it was to him the commencement of a new life—a *vita nuova*. His existence was thoroughly awakened and ennobled. There was infused into his soul a new spirit. And this was the appearance of Beatrice, the daughter of Folco Portinari, whom he met at a banquet at her father's house. She was several months younger than the boy whom her aspect had thrown into such ineffable ecstasies of happiness, and was dressed in a subdued and becoming crimson, wearing a cincture of ornaments befitting her childish years. When he saw her, such a gushing exuberance of affection thrilled his soul that it "showed itself in the minutest pulsations of his frame." From that time Love held sovereign sway over his soul, filled him with continual thoughts of her, induced him, whenever an opportunity presented itself, to stealthily steal a glance at her; and he believed her to be the realization of Homer's words: "From heaven she had her birth, and not from mortal clay." After nine years' brooding with devoted fervour over her memory, he saw her again amid the gaieties of May-day festival, between two noble ladies. She wafted to him a smile of recognition which transported him to the happiness of heaven. Even the most distant melody of her voice intoxicated him with a paroxysm of pleasure, and those who had been in her society for a short time were in his eyes invested with additional sanctity—or, at least, with a very peculiar kind of worthiness. The very suspicion of a frown from her almost killed him with trouble. The further she went away from him the more it magnified his grief: while his loving, sensitive spirit was betrayed into all kinds of awkward exhibitions and humiliating extravagancies: for, we know, "Love is blind, and lovers cannot see the little follies that themselves commit." But this was not the case with Dante, for he had an overwhelming consciousness all the time of the bitter follies he was committing, but which he couldn't help. He says, "Whenever and wherever she appeared, in the hope of her most priceless salute, I had no longer an enemy in the world—such a flame of charity was kindled within me, making me forgive every one who had offended me; and had I then been asked

for any favour upon earth, I should, with looks clothed with humility, have answered nothing but *Love*."

As might naturally be expected, he poured out the exuberance of his heart in sonnets. She appears to him in a fair vision in a dream. He awoke, and wrote a sonnet. A friend of hers went away; he wrote a sonnet. Another young friend died; he wrote a sonnet. He saw her at a wedding. His emotion and awkwardness were so intense that it excited the ridicule of her companions. He went home weeping, and blushing as he wept, and explained to her the cause of it, and solicited her compassion, in a sonnet. Probably the true secret of his trouble was the fact that she had been already wedded to another. Her father, the progenitor of all those wondrous perfections which were displayed in that most excelling Beatrice, died. Her grief was his own: he tried to soothe the bitterness by a sonnet. The year afterwards, 1290, the sainted spirit herself was summoned to another world, and the city was left utterly widowed and despoiled of all its worth, while, like an ancient Hebrew prophet, Dante sat sighing and weeping amid the desolation.

Boccaccio says, "What with weeping and anguish, and total disregard of his personal appearance, he became like some savage thing;" and, from what he says, he must have literally realized Rosalind's description: "a lean cheek, a blue eye and sunken; an unquestionable spirit, a beard neglected, his hose ungartered, bonnet unbanded, sleeve unbuttoned, shoe untied, and everything about him demonstrating a careless desolation." On the anniversary of her death he was found sketching an angel on a tablet, and brooding with fond fervour over her memory.

If we want his own description of all this, if we want a minute analysis of the man's affections—an unbosoming of even the very fibres of his early nature—the throbbings of his mighty heart, and to see how the very process of his genius developed itself in song, we must read his *Vita Nuova*, composed at the age of twenty-eight, in a style the very model of simplicity and gracefulness, of delicacy and candour. It is a tender child-like revelation of the passions and mysticism of his early life. The last words of this graceful autobiography of his early affections are these:—"There appeared to me a wonderful vision, in which I saw things that made me determine to write no more of this dear Saint, until I should be able to write of her more worthily; and, of a surety, she knows that I study to attain unto this with all my powers, so, if it shall please Him, of whom all things live, to

spare my life for some years longer, I hope to say that of her which never yet hath been said of any lady; and then, may it please Him, who is the Father of all good, to suffer my soul to see the glory of its mistress—*i.e.* of this sainted Beatrice, who now, abiding in glory, looketh upon the face of Him *qui est per omnia sæcula benedictus.*"

REV. WILLIAM HOLMES.

[*To be continued.*]

NIGH AT HAND.



THROUGH mists that hide from me my God, I see

A shapeless form : Death comes, and beckons me :

I scent the odours of the Spirit-land :

And, with commingled joy and terror, hear

The far-off whispers of a white-robed band :—

Nearer they come—yet nearer—yet more near :

Is it rehearsal of a "Welcome" song

That will be in my heart and ear, ere long ?

Do these bright spirits wait till Death may give

The soul its franchise—and I die to live ?

Does Fancy send the breeze from yon green mountain ?

(I am not dreaming when it cools my brow.)

Are they the sparkles of an actual fountain

That gladden and refresh my spirit now ?

How beautiful the burst of holy light !

How beautiful the day that has no night !

Open ! ye everlasting gates ! I pray—

Waiting, but yearning—for that perfect day !

Hark ! to these Allelujahs ! "Hail ! all hail !"

Shall *they* be echoed by a sob and wail ?

Friends "gone before," these are your happy voices :

The old, sweet sounds : my very soul rejoices !

Ah ! through the mist, the great white throne I see :

And now a Saint in Glory beckons me.

Is Death a foe to dread ? the Death who giveth

Life—the unburthened Life that ever liveth !

Who shrinks from Death ? Come when he will or may,

The night he brings will bring the risen day :

His call—his touch—we neither seek nor shun :

His life is ended when his work is done.

Our spear and shield no cloud of Death can dim :
 He triumphs not o'er us—we conquer him !
 How long, O Lord. how long ere I shall see
 The myriad glories of a holier sphere ?
 And worship in Thy presence ;—not as here
 In chains that keep the shackled Soul from Thee !
 My God ! let that Eternal Home be near !
 Master ! I bring to Thee a Soul opprest ;
 Weary and heavy laden : seeking rest :
 Strengthen my Faith : that, with my latest breath,
 I greet thy messenger of mercy—Death !

S. C. HALL.

ÆGYPTUS REDIVIVUS.¹

ON THE VISIT OF THE PRINCE OF WALES TO INDIA.



H land of marvels ! never since the day
 When thy resistless queen in purple pride
 Sailed forth to meet the conquered conqueror,
 Hast thou beheld so fair a scene as now,
 When he, the heir to empire such as thou
 E'en in thy prime ne'er dreamt of—makes of thee
 A highway to the land of gold and gems :
 Not as a conqueror, over heaps of slain,
 With weeping captives at his chariot wheels,
 But as a mighty monarch, going to bless
 The nuptials of his faithful servitors—
 The glowing East—the bridegroom—radiant now
 Awaits the bride, betrothed upon that day
 When the long-parted floods from east to west,
 From west to east stretched forth a willing hand,
 Met, and embraced, and richly laden both,
 Swift interchanged love tokens.

Now the day
 Of consummation dawns, and all the world
 Follows with pride the footsteps of a Prince,
 Who leads the joyful West with full accord

¹ In this poem an attempt has been made to show modern civilization, and the triumphs of modern art as they would have appeared to the ancient Egyptians, and at the same time, to give a slight sketch of the religion and superstitions of that remarkable people.

To the fair scene of future household cares,
And loving tendance.

Gold, coral, ivory, pearls,
Gems and sweet spices, bears the bridegroom forth
To deck his bride—she, from her loom supplies
Fair linen meet for kings, and adds thereto
Such wares as thrifty housewives need for use
And mutual comfort—and a shout ascends
From gathered nations, hailing with delight
Th' auspicious union.

Surely, now the hour
So long foretold, dawns on the earth at last,
When nation unto nation shall send forth
The olive-branch, and learn to war no more.
Oh, Egypt, in thy pride, thine iron heel
Trode down the nations, and yon mighty piles
Reared to attest thy glory, groaned aloud
Pregnant with sighs of an oppressed race ;
But now, thy yoke long broken, kings arise
To do thee honour, make of thee a way
For commerce, and the pomp of peaceful men,
In peaceful days, who bind thy hoary brows
With bloodless wreaths, victorious trophies won
By patient labour, science-led alone ;
Seek to ennoble thee by purer faith,
Free from the prophet's wild fanatic zeal,
As from the gross idolatry of old ;
Till bright once more thy sun-loved land shall shine
Glory of this as of the ancient world.

Thus mused I, as the light of evening shone
Upon the new-made flood, which bore in pride
Our Prince, the hope of Britain and of Ind,
Towards the eastern limits of his throne.
Sky, earth, and flood blushed with a ruddy glow,
And mimic waves danced laughing up and down,
And floating opalescent from the prow
Of many a noble vessel, seemed to tell
Of hope and joy alone.

But lo ! a sigh,
Faint, soft, and musical like the lone harp

Breathed on by Zephyrus, smote on my ear
 From far—with trembling accents—Memnon spoke.²
 “Thou speak’st as mortals speak unwittingly,
 To whom the past all dark, the present fair,
 The future full of hope—to us, alas!
 Dark glooms the present, darker the days to come,
 But visions of the past, how bright ye seem,
 How full of life and joy, how void of care!
 I see ye now, fair daughters of the Nile,
 As trooping lotus-crowned ye went to pay
 Meet adoration in yon new-built fane.³
 The minstrels and magicians too are there,
 And he, the mighty monarch of them all,
 Great Rameses, with his well-trained warrior bands,
 And kings as slaves, and trusty counsellors,
 All to give praise to Isis, mighty Queen
 Ruling the realms of night, on whose pure brow
 Glistens the crescent moon, beneath whose glance
 Surge the wide water-floods, and kingly Nile
 Laves the broad valley with his priceless waves,
 And at her nod retires.—Then Osiris
 Her glorious consort, with his fiery eye
 Seeks out the hidden grain, and warms to life,
 And wakes to sudden beauty all the plain.
 ’Twas he, the mighty one, who thrilled my breast,
 And tuned my heart to music—silenced now
 For ever.—Can I hymn his praise, when low
 Mingled with dust, his temples and his priests
 Lie silent as his worshippers; yet he,
 The Lord of life, rules proudly as of yore,
 And heaps his bounty on a thankless land.
 Thou call’st us base idolators, but know’st
 Nought of the mysteries of our ancient faith.
 Life was our worship! Life, the unstinted gift
 Of him, the great Life-giver, freely given
 And ne’er to be withdrawn, therefore each plant,

² Memnon, son of the Morning, sits looking towards the East.

³ The Ramesium, to which this and its fellow statue are supposed to have served as the commencement of an avenue.

⁴ Osiris was the representative of the Sun, at whose rising Memnon was supposed to give forth a musical sound.

Each crawling reptile, beast, and fish, and bird,
 Was unto us a god—a germ of life—
 Portion of the Life-giver; thus we knew,
 The breath departed surely would return,
 Or in the same, or in some other form,
 And re-inhabit earth; therefore we laid
 Our mighty in yon giant pyramids,
 That he, the Lord of life, might look on them,
 And quicken them again in their own form.⁵
 I saw the mighty Rameses proudly laid,
 Odorous with spices, all his kingly frame
 Perfect as when he breathed, his limbs firm bound
 With finest linen, and upon his brow,
 And on his breast,⁶ the eternal scarabeus
 Kept endless watch—I've waited many years,
 Ages that roll on slowly—still he sleeps
 Or wakes in meaner guise; once I had deemed
 Him risen indeed, for on the plain I saw
 Hosts like to his, but lo, the conqueror
 Came as an alien and an enemy⁷
 And Egypt groaned; her temples were despoiled,
 And fire and sword consumed the living gods.
 Where wert thou then, oh, glorious king of men,
 That thou didst tarry to avenge thy sons?
 Had not the cycle of the ages yet
 Brought back thy star from its appointed bourne?
 Or were the gods yet unappeased, because
 Mad with blind weariness thou daredst forestall
 Their destined hour, and seek in newer life
 Light passed from this! deeming the vast unknown
 More worthy of a hero to essay,
 Than helpless linger in a human frame.⁸
 Ages have passed since then, and oft the land

⁵ The Egyptians believed in the transmigration of souls, but that after a cycle of transformations, each soul would return to its former habitat.

⁶ The Creator was worshipped under the form of a scarabeus, and this beetle covered with hieroglyphics was always placed on the breast of the mummy as an amulet or charm, to preserve the body from the attacks of evil spirits, and to ensure its eventual resuscitation.

⁷ Cambysis.

⁸ The great conqueror Rameses II., the Sesostris of history, is said to have committed suicide in consequence of blindness.

Hath fallen to other masters, yet a time
 Will come at last, when brightly o'er his tomb
 The star of his nativity shall shine
 And the great Life-giver shall say, Arise!⁹
 Then Egypt shall renew her ancient pride,
 Shall rule and not be ruled by stranger hands.
 Thou boastest of the science of thy race,
 Oh mortal, canst thou raise the sepulchred?
 Raise thou my king, I'll worship then thy power;
 Cause him to come all radiant from the east,
 With him thou call'st thy monarch yet to be
 As once before he came, with victory crowned
 And Prince attended. He shall keep thy way
 To farthest Ind against the mightiest foe;
 Thou gloriest in thine art—canst thou restore
 Yon ruined temple, with its obelisks,
 Its columns, and its statues? or from the sand
 Rear up a rival giant pyramid,
 With all its mysteries, unfathomed yet
 By mortal science? yonder puny stream,
 The measure of thy strength, wherein thou seest
 So much of marvel and so much of praise,
 Seems unto me as nought—Have I not seen
 Its waters roll, not once, but *many* times
 Since that great king who first conceived the same,¹⁰
 And swallowed up as oft, because the gods
 Saw therein peril to the land they loved.
 Where Pharaohs failed, how think'st thou to succeed?
 Or have the gods indeed forsaken us,
 And care not that our bright and flowery land
 Is trodden down of strangers!

Markest thou

 The blood-red tinge upon the darkening wave?
 Omen of deadly import!¹¹ Lo, I see

⁹ Almost all nations have expected the return of their great conquerors, and this myth appears to have been specially attached to Rameses II. in Egypt, who is said to have carried his victorious arms even to India.

¹⁰ Rameses II. is said to have been the first to undertake to make a canal across the isthmus, in which he succeeded, several later monarchs having renewed the attempt, but less successfully.

¹¹ At certain times the Nile runs red like blood.

Instead of peace, legions from East to West
 Gathered in haste to battle! Lo, I see
 The struggling sailor, yielding up his life
 'Mid the wild toss of yon tumultuous waves!
 These are thy trophies—these! Yet Egypt, joy!
 Strangers may toil, but thou shalt reap the fruit,
 And rise once more to glory and to fame.
 So Neith¹² decrees, turning the wills of men
 To her own purpose—in her hands I leave
 The fate of all things, and resignedly
 Await her righteous doom.”—

Here ceased the voice,

Nought save the breath of eve sighed o'er the waste,
 Moaned through the silent tombs, and seemed to say,
 “Arise, O mighty, and re-visit earth;
 Reign as of yore, that Egypt too may live!”
 Alone I stood upon the streamlet's verge,
 The dead came round me, and a thrill of awe
 Checked the wild song of triumph on my lips;
 Oh! what the pomp and pride of monarchs now,
 Compared with that of golden ages gone!
 Poor, weak and vain the efforts of our art,
 Beside the marvels of the mighty dead;
 More humbly I surveyed the boasted flood,
 The golden highway 'twixt the West and East,
 The roadway strewn with olive and with palm,
 Whereby our future kings may pass in pride
 From bound to bound of all their vast domain.
 Yet still we dare to say our meed of praise
 Is that we sought not with a rod of iron
 To rear a barren mountain to the skies,
 But to convey across the desert waste
 A stream of life; therefore our hope is just
 That this shall last, though crumbling pyramids
 Collapse and fall. Ages to come as now,
 A wave of plenty to a smiling land.

A. W. BUCKLAND.

¹² Neith, the Egyptian goddess of wisdom.

THE EPIC OF HADES.*

IT is now four or five years since the author of this volume appeared before the public under the appellation of "A New Writer." His "Songs of Two Worlds," in three series, have won for him an honourable place among living poets. In the third series of these Songs there were three stories, entitled "From Hades," which met with so much favour, that though he announced his intention of discontinuing his labours, he has been induced to reconsider his resolution, and here republishes them with others of a similar kind. In so doing he has shown true wisdom, which will, no doubt, meet with its due reward. But we cannot think he has chosen a very suitable title for his work, which is rather a collection of classical legends than an epic.

After the manner of Dante, he pays an imaginary visit to the unseen world, where he holds converse with departed spirits, from whom he learns the incidents of their earthly career and the circumstances of their death. In this way he presents the reader with beautiful poetic versions of some twenty of the legends of classical antiquity. For those who do not happen to be familiar with the originals, they will have the additional charm of novelty, and even classical readers can hardly fail to be pleased with the artistic form in which they are here represented. The writer is deeply imbued with the true classical spirit. There is nothing in his work to offend the most refined taste. His verse is highly polished, smooth, and sweet, yet vigorous and effective, without being at all stiff or artificial. There is no straining after effect, no violent contortion, no wild extravagance for the purpose of gaining the credit of originality. It is quite refreshing, after reading some of the poetry of the present day, to fall in with a poet who writes with such unaffected simplicity of aim and manner, who is so completely absorbed in his subject that he forgets himself, and whose sentiments are at once weighty and sound, if not remarkable for novelty. He feels and acknowledges the difficulty which besets the path of the modern poet, who is anxious to strike out something new.

" We have no more

The world to choose from, who, where'er we turn,
Tread through old thoughts and fair.

Yet must we sing—

We have no choice ; and if more hard the toil

* By the Author of "Songs of Two Worlds." H. S. King and Co.

In noon, when all is clear, than in the fresh
 White mists of early morn, yet do we find
 Achievement its own guerdon, and at last
 The rounder song of manhood grows more sweet
 Than the high note of youth."

One of his most successful efforts in the present volume is the following story of Eurydice, as told by herself, in conversation with Orpheus.

"Like a morning breeze
 Which blows in summer from the gates of dawn,
 Across the fields of spice, and wakes to life
 Their slumbering perfume, through this silent land
 Of whispering voices and of half-closed eyes,
 Where scarce a footstep sounds, nor any strain
 Of earthly song, thou cam'st; and suddenly
 The pale cheeks flushed a little, murmured words
 Rose to a faint, thin treble; the throng of ghosts,
 Pacing along the sunless ways and still,
 Felt a new life. Thou camest, dear, and straight
 The dull, cold river broke in sparkling foam,
 The pale and scentless flower grew perfumed; last
 To the dim chamber, where with the sad queen
 I sat in gloom, and silently inwove
 Dead wreaths of amaranth; thy music came
 Laden with life, and I, who seemed to know
 Not life's voice only, but my own, rose up,
 Along the hollow pathways following
 The sound which brought back earth and life and love,
 And memory and longing. Yet I went
 With half-reluctant footsteps, as of one
 Whom passion draws, or some high fantasy,
 Despite himself, because some subtle spell,
 Part born of dread to cross that sullen stream
 And its grim guardians, part of secret shame
 Of the young airs and freshness of the earth,
 Being that I was, sustained me.

Then at last,
 From voice and lyre so high a strain arose,
 As trembled on the utter verge of being,
 And thrilling, poured out life. Thus closelier drawn

I walked with thee, shut in by halcyon sound
And soft environments of harmony,
Beyond the ghostly gates, beyond the dim
Calm fields, where the beetle hummed and the pale owl
Stole noiseless from the copse, and the white blooms
Stretched thin for lack of sun : so fair a light
Born out of consonant sound environed me,
Nor looked I backward, as we seemed to move
To some high goal of thought and life and love,
Like twin birds flying past with equal wing
Out of the night, to meet the coming sun
Above a sea. But on thy dear fair eyes,
The eyes that well I knew on the old earth,
I looked not, for with averted gaze
Thou leddest, and I followed ; for, indeed,
While that high strain was sounding, I was rapt
In faith and a high courage, driving out
All doubt and discontent and womanish fear,
Nay, even my love itself. But when awhile
It sank a little, or seemed to sink and fall
To lower levels, seeing that use makes blunt
The too-accustomed ear, straightway desire,
To look once more on thy recovered eyes,
Seized me, and oft I called with piteous voice,
Beseeching thee to turn. But thou long time
Wert even as one who heard not, with grave sigh
And waving hand denying. Finally,
When now we neared the stream, on whose far shore
Lay life, great terror took me, and I shrieked
Thy name as in despair. Then thou, as one
Who knows him set in some great jeopardy,
A swift death fronting him on either hand.
Didst slowly turning gaze ; and lo ! I saw
Thine eyes grown awful, life that looked on death,
Clear purity on dark and cankered sin,
The immortal on corruption—not the eyes
That erst I knew in life, but dreadfuller ;
And stranger ; as I looked, I seemed to swoon,
Some blind force whirled me back, and when I woke,
I saw thee vanish in the middle stream,

A speck on the dull waters, taking with thee
My life, and leaving love with me."

Few will deny that there is real poetic power here, not without tender touches true to nature, vivid description, yet no sort of exaggeration—abundance of detail, but not too much. The versification is carefully wrought, the rhythm varied, and the diction chaste. It is evident the author is a student of Tennyson, but he cannot fairly be called a slavish imitator. He has no small share of native poetical power, which he will do well to employ in the reproduction of other classical myths.

SCATTERED SONGS.

IS there hope in our singing? and life on the breeze
Which wafts our frail bark o'er the billowy seas
While into the lap of the Future we fling
The hopes that we cherish, the songs that we sing?
Are the days told by sorrows, the nights by our tears,
While we falter and faint with the yearnings of years?
Do they laugh and despise us for dreaming that truth
Shall sometimes take hold in the heart of a youth?
Do they sigh as we scatter the seed? do they say
No harvest and reapers will come to repay?
Have we scorn for our sowing? and mocking and mirth
For blessings we fain would be bringing to earth?
Shall we labour no more, but in love and delight
Forget that the day is the herald of night,
Forget that Death holds in his wavering hand,
The years of our life as a remnant of sand?
Shall we see the oppressor build bulwarks of wrongs,
Nor seek to o'erthrow them with torrents of songs;
Forgetting the gall in the honey man sips,
Then go to the grave with a laugh on our lips?
Or shall we not rather bear bravely our cross,
And loving our brother, think lightly of loss,
Until when Time's hand shall our harps have unstrung,
The world shall be better for songs we have sung?

LEONARD LLOYD.

SPRING IS COMING.

Words by H. THORNTON.

Music by LANSLOWNE COTTELL, R.A.M.

ACCOMP. *tr* *mf*

1. Spring.... is com - ing, flow - - 'rets spring - ing,
2. Fet - - tered foun - tains forth..... are gush - ing;

p

Bud - - ding trees, soft showers of rain, And a
Riv - - ers that have burst their chain, Wild with

poco riten.

PED. *

host of song - sters sing - ing, Spring.... is com - ing
wel - come sea - ward rush - ing, Shout..... that Spring has

back a - gain. Migh - ty moun - tains heaven - ward
come a - gain. Bleed - ing hearts of life..... a -

PED. *

reach - ing, Pour..... your snows up - on the plain;
wea - ry, Ga - ther hope, nor thus com - plain;

God..... has heard your mute.... be - sech - ing, And has
For..... though win - ter months are drear - y, Spring, you

sent..... the Spring a - gain. Come,.....
know,..... must come a - gain.

tr

Come,..... Spring is com - ing back..... a -

tr